



COUNCIL CHRONICLES

Summer 2007

The Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities



“When Opportunity Knocks, Grab it”

In 2004, Mike Cox, a Lincoln County resident since 1987, went out to his mailbox just as he did every day. But on this particular day, instead of receiving the usual onslaught of bills and flyers, he found a Social Security Ticket to Work. Mike saw this as his big opportunity to realize his dreams. He immediately called the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation office in Danville. As he now says, “If you don’t grab it the first time right, you might not get a second chance.” His dream had long been to own his own lawn care business, having been, as he puts it, “born with a green thumb.” Patty Edwards, his OVR Counselor, told Mike about Project ASSET (Advancing Supported Self-Employment Techniques), a collaborative project of the Kentucky Developmental Disabilities Council and the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. With the support of a team that included Ms. Edwards, OVR Supported Employment Consultant Lori Norton, and individuals from various agencies, Mike began his journey.

From the beginning, Mike was diligent, positive and motivated about establishing his business, Land Art, which officially opened in August 2005. One of his greatest challenges has been to find reliable transportation. He now is on his third and “most reliable” truck, one he received from his brother that includes a newly rebuilt transmission. Mike has jobs that include residential mowing and upkeep of a local cemetery. He hopes to have 30 to 40 yards this summer and is doing some heavy marketing to ensure that this occurs. He has promotional signs for his truck, yard signs, “door hangers” he places on residential homes, flyers he puts on cars, and T-Shirts. He hands out his business cards whenever possible. Mike hopes that, with increased revenue, he will be able to expand his business next season to landscaping and installing fishponds. He has plans to purchase a tiller, a push mower

Project ASSET (Advancing Supported Self-Employment Techniques) has assisted 22 individuals who have significant developmental disabilities in the exploration, development, and operation of their own businesses

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Center for Accessible Living, KATLC to Pilot Financial Literacy Training Plans Are To Go Statewide in 2008



This fall, the Center for Accessible Living in Louisville and KATLC will pilot a financial literacy training program for individuals with disabilities. A group of participants in the Louisville metropolitan area will be selected to participate in a four one-day training sessions. The curriculum for the training is currently being developed.

Because of low employment rates, generally low pay, high poverty rates, and a high rate of dependence upon government benefit programs, among other factors, individuals with disabilities often do not have the same opportunities as the general population to participate in the financial mainstream of society. In the loan applications it receives, KATLC has repeatedly seen the results of this: little or no credit history, bad credit, charge-offs, bankruptcies, and

more. People with disabilities, young and old, need access to financial institutions. This pilot training program will be designed to raise the financial

literacy of the participants, especially in regards to consumer credit transactions, and will hopefully facilitate financial independence through asset accumulation and the responsible use of credit.

After the initial pilot is conducted in Louisville, the curriculum will be modified and adapted as needed and then the training will be replicated at the state's other five independent living centers. Those centers are in Murray, Bowling Green, Covington, Lexington, and Harlan. One expected result of this program will be to build the capacity among the independent living centers to assist individuals with disabilities on personal finance issues.

Beautiful Pastures

The drive to the Webb/Taylor Horseback Riding and Boarding, LLC is breathtaking. Situated in rural Barren County, the rolling land is dominated by crop fields and livestock. It is a picturesque setting for a business devoted to horseback riding and the care of horses. Kevin Webb is the proud owner, of this business, where he currently boards eight horses, works with his family to break horses, offers horseback riding (including accessible riding), and rents out space for birthday and anniversary gatherings. The sky is the limit with this business, and with the business covering approximately 4 acres, there is plenty of sky to be seen!

Plans for this business began in May 2003, with an application to Project ASSET, a collaborative initiative of the Kentucky Developmental Disabilities Council and the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Kevin has always had a love for horses and had experience in their general care. In addition, he loves working outdoors, has substantial supports from his family, and possesses the drive and passion to succeed in the field.

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Opportunity Knocks (cont. from front cover)

and a mulching machine.

Mike says that owning Land Art has increased his confidence. In the past, he had lost jobs for various reasons, but with having his own business, he is able to set his own pace and his own hours, work independently and take a break at work whenever he needs it without the fear of being fired. His advice to others interested in self-employment is: “If that’s what you want go for it – if you are not sure, wait until you decide it is what you want, you need a lot of patience”.

According to Mike, ‘the competition is rough this year,’ but he has the drive and support to keep pushing forward. To contact Mike Cox at Land Art, please call 606-346-5124. He works in Casey, Lincoln and Boyle counties.

Special Thanks to those individuals who have assisted Mike fulfill his lifelong dream: Patti Edwards, Lori Norton, Lynda McKinley, Trevor Gosser, John Preston, Matt John, Nancy Chesser, and Jim Huston.

After five years, Project ASSET is ending. Project ASSET (Advancing Supported Self-Employment Techniques) is Kentucky’s pilot project on supported self-employment. Funded by the Kentucky Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council with matching dollars from OVR, the project has assisted 22 individuals who have significant developmental disabilities in the exploration, development, and operation of their own businesses over a five-year period. DD Council funding for the project expires this summer.

The principles of supported employment, when applied to self-owned businesses, assure that the person who will own the business has an interest in it, the capacity to participate in it, and the support needed to make the business suc-

cessful. Each Business Development Team has spent endless hours making sure that the business is created “around” the person with his/her active participation. Valued roles for the owner with disabilities in the businesses are a priority.

Project ASSET has already begun to have replication impact through Project BEACON, (Business Enterprises Are Creating Opportunities Now) an OVR Supported Employment Branch pilot to serve individuals with mental illness in supported self-employment.

*“If that’s what you
want go for it “-*

Mike Cox



Beautiful Pastures (cont.)

Project ASSET brought a team of individuals together to assist Kevin. These individuals included staff from Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the University of Kentucky, the Social Security Administration (for the development of a PASS plan), Venture Mentors, LLC and of course, Kevin's immediate family: his mother, Glenna Taylor and step-father Ronnie Taylor.

Over the past several years, there have been several challenges in financing an operation of this size. With the assistance of funds from Project ASSET, money made available through a Social Security PASS plan, and personal investment, an outdoor riding arena, a 14-stall barn for boarding horses and a large sun shelter with picnic tables have been built and a "mule" 4 wheeler, an accessible saddle purchased, and various tools and equipment have been purchased! As with any new business, looking towards the future is always paramount. Kevin would like to build paddocks and an indoor riding arena. Having the indoor riding arena would enable the business to become more competitive all year long and offer a variety of other services for income.

Webb/Taylor Horseback Riding and Boarding, LLC finally opened the stall doors at a grand opening on April 28, 2006. Kevin says there is nothing about his business he does not like. He enjoys promoting his business, fencing, hauling needed items, such as feed and hay for the horses in his mule, getting the horses in and out of the stables, keeping family informed on what inventory is low, feeding and watering the horses, and even cleaning the stables! There is no task overlooked at the farm, and when there is anything to be done, Kevin wants it to be done immediately. Marketing continues, primarily by word of mouth, signage on the property, newspaper articles and advertisement. Kevin and his family have a few words of wisdom to pass on to others interested in becoming self employed: "Make sure you are totally committed"! They emphasize the importance of marketing, knowing applicable state laws, developing a good business plan, and finding the right professionals for business matters, such as an accountant.

The progress of Kevin's business, although in its infancy, is amazing. A trip to Webb/Taylor is a joy, so give Kevin a call, hop in your car and travel to those beautiful pastures.

For anyone interested in riding lessons, short/long term boarding or plenty of outdoor space for a special event, please contact Kevin Webb c/o Glenna Taylor at 270-427-3630 or Kevin@WebbTaylor.com. Current prices are \$20.00 an hour for horseback riding lessons, special event prices start at \$25.00 an hour and boarding prices are available upon request.

***"MAKE SURE YOU ARE
TOTALLY COMMITTED!" -
Kevin Webb***



NOTES



KSAFF members represented their organization at the National DD Council's annual conference in 2004 and 2006

Kentucky Self-Advocates For Freedom (KSAF)

Kentucky Self-Advocates for Freedom (KSAF) (www.kyselfadvocates.org) is an organization run by and for people with disabilities. The Kentucky Council funded this initiative that began 4 years ago to address a targeted area that was identified as a need when developing the five year plan. Our approach was to hire outside facilitators to come to Kentucky with no affiliation to any particular state organization. By doing this we were assured that no special interest other than the will of self-advocates were represented. Also by taking ourselves out of the process we were preventing our own biases from impacting the desires of self-advocates. All of the work of the facilitators culminated into a summit in which it was determined that indeed self-advocates wanted their own organization.

During the first statewide conference they chose a name, elected a board of directors discussed organizational matters such as regional and local chapters and began the process of filing for non-profit status. The

Council's role has been to provide support in reaching the goals that they have set forth to accomplish. KSAF has been invited to speak at many national conferences and has provided technical assistance to other states for creating their own Self-Advocacy organizations. Additionally, KSAF has been very active in statewide and local initiatives including; assessing polling places and voting initiatives, participating in coalitions, speaking with policy makers, creating systems change, and developing community impact initiatives designed to impact all, not just people with disabilities.

Initially the Council issued an RFP for consulting services to assist with the creation of the organization, provide training and support to group which included but not limited to board development, member recruitment, support fund raising and strategic planning. The Council has chosen to contract directly with KySAFF beginning in 2007. The organization has received not-for-profit status, hired an advisor and has indi-

KSAF (cont.)

cated that they have the necessary systems in place to management the fiscal aspects of the organization.

The original target read:

By 2006, there will be a grassroots citizens group who meet regularly to impact systems change.

Thus far there are approximately 150 members spread out across 7 different chapters around the state. The organization is run solely by persons with disabilities but anyone can join.

They operate from a 12 member board of directors who represent

the various chapters.

The Council will begin reducing the allocation of funds incrementally that have been negotiated with KyStaff. The ultimate goal for our Council is to have this group fully self sufficient by the year 2011. The Council is aware that this will prove to be a great challenge but we have assured the group that the Council is committed to working with them to assure the continued success of the organization.



Corbin Chapter's 10th Anniversary party



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Disabilities*

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We're on the Web!!!

www.kcdd.ky.gov

KCDD's next Full Council meeting

August 16-17, 2007

Holiday Inn Hurstbourne

Louisville, KY

Contact Shelley Runkle for more details

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SUMMER 2007